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ABSTRACT

From a sample of over 1,000 advertisements for school superintendent positions, this study compiles a list of qualifications and tasks required of most superintendents and indicates the trends in school board expectations of superintendents. The author first notes the degree of education preferred by school boards in their superintendents and then analyzes the work experiences generally required of candidates for superintendent positions. The tasks and personal qualities expected of practicing superintendents are detailed, as well. Despite the wide differences in school size and location, no significant relationship was found between demographic variables and requirements of those seeking superintendent positions. (JW)

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THE CURRENT TREND OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

REPORT OF A STUDY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Superintendency is a demanding and important position in the education. Superintendents perform a wide variety of tasks. They deal with the policy implementation, curriculum, finance, personnel, collective negotiation, planning and goal setting, evaluation, accountability, special education, state and federal regulations, facilities management, relationship with board-members, assistants, principals, teachers, community, non-certified staff, parents of the students, state department of education, business people; and a number of other tasks as needed.

Job descriptions are developed to meet the specific needs of the school districts that develop them. Because of the complexity of the job and the changing trends of the role of superintendency, it is not easy to describe the tasks the superintendents perform on their job. The lack of a right job description may lead to improper selection of the candidate, evaluation of superintendents, and hence his turnover.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the turnover of superintendents has been estimated at 3000-5000

a year, which is 19-32 percent turnover.[1] While there are various reasons, lack of a proper job description is considered to have an effect on the turnover.

Each school district develops job description/recruiting brochures according to their need. A study of their current vacancy announcements is an indicator of the current trend of the expected role of superintendency. The intent of this proposed study is to identify the general statement of job description of school superintendents and to attempt to give a current trend of the same.

Statement of Problem

What is the current trend of the job description of superintendents in the United States?

Sub-problems

1. What are the educational requirements for the school superintendents?

2. What are the work experience requirements for the school superintendents?

3. What are the tasks requirements for the school superintendents?

4. What is the relationship between the demographic variables of the school districts to the educational, work experience, and tasks requirements for the school superintendents?

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[1] Richard H. Barr, Education Program Officer, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Assistant Secretary, Washington, D.C. 20202. Personal correspondence, October 7, 1980.

Significance and Need for the Study

This study has significance in several ways. Job description has been considered important to the process of the selection of candidates, their performance, productivity, and organizational success. Every year 3000-5000 school boards in the nation advertises superintendency positions. They may use the findings of this study to develop the job description/recruiting brochures for their school districts to secure a comfortable and effective appointment for them. All the school boards, state boards of education, and the U.S. Department of Education may use the prospective findings of this study as a current indicator of the trend of the position of school superintendency for planning services to meet the needs of the chief school administrators. The findings may also help the prospective and incumbent superintendents as it will portray for them some of the aspects of the job. It may also be of use to the institutions preparing the school superintendents in refining their programs.

In summary, this proposed study can have significance for its possible practical implications as well as for its limited part in the extension of our knowledge abou the job of the chief school administrators.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Use of a job description in the selection process of a superintendent is suggested by the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Boards Association.[1]

There are several sources that publishes superintendency positions. Some of these are: American Association of School Administrators,[2] Educational Listing Services, Inc.,[3] National Association of School Boards,[4] New York Times.[5] They all publish the available positions on a nationwide basis. There are ofcourse other sources which provide information about the available positions.

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[1]The American Association of School Administrators Selecting A Superintendent (Virginia: The American Association of School Administrators, 1979), p.19.

[2]American Association of School Administrators Job Bulletin (Virginia: American Association of School Administrators) published at every six-week intervals for its members.

[3]Educational Listing Services Administrator's Career Monthly (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Listing Services, Inc.) published every month.

[4]National School Boards Association The Executive Educator and Career (Washington D.C.: National School Boards Association) published every month.

[5]New York Times The Week in Review (N.Y.: New York Times) publishes Careers in Education every week.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample Selection

The study population consisted of all the available superintendencies in the United States. An estimated 9,000-15,000 openings may have been available during the past three years. Using the advertisements published in the sources listed earlier on page 4, 1030 advertised positions were considered from the past three years for the purpose of this study. The advertisements provide information in brief about the major requirements of the school districts. Detailed brochures of job descriptions were also obtained from 515 school districts selected atrandom from these advertisements. The decision to study available advertisements for the past three years was made to enable the researcher study more of the available positions over a period of time for better results.

The power of both of these sample selections, according to Cohen and Cohen exceeds .995 at .05 level of significance.[1]

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[1] J. Cohen and P. Cohen Applied Multiple Regression Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1975).

These samples selected provides the data from small, medium, large size districts; urban, sub-urban, rural, and school districts from every state in the nation. Positions advertised more than once in different issues or in different sources were considered only once to avoid duplication.

Demographic Variables

Size, type (urban, suburban, rural) of the school district, and the state in which a school district is located are considered to be the possible variables whihc may have an effect on the job description. Hece all these three variables are used to find the relationship between the demographic variables and the educationa, work experience, and tasks requirements for the school districts.

Treatment of Data

Frequencies for the educational, work experience, and the task requirements were calculated. Coefficient of correlations were determined to find the relationships between size, type, location (state) and the requirements of the school districts.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As described earlier on page 5, 1030 superintendency positions were selected for the purpose of this study. The power of this selection, according to Cohen and Cohen, exceeds .995 at .05 level of significance.[1]

Sub-problem one

Sub-problem one attempted to determine the educational requirements for the selection of the superintendents. Frequency distributions and the percentage of the requirements were found.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Education	Frequency	Percent
Doctorate	287	27.9
6th year, M.A.+30 credits	31	3.0
Master's	88	8.6
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1145[a]	111.3

n= 1030

[a]This total frequency and percent exceeds the number n and the 100% as some of the school boards wrote more than one requirement.
This reference applies to all the tables 1-3.

[1]Cohen and Cohen Applied Multiple Regression Analysis for Behavioral Sciences

About one-fourth (27.9%) of the school boards advertised that they would prefer a candidate with an earned doctorate compared to 30% of the superintendents who presently hold a doctoral degree;[1] a few (3%) required a candidate to have 6th year, M.A. + 30 or more credits; 8.6% requires a candidate to have a master's degree; 67.2% stated in the job descriptions that the candidate meet the certification requirements;[2] and 4.6% did not mention any requirement in their advertisements.

Sub-problem two

Sub-problem two attempted to determine the work experience for the school superintendents. Frequency distribution and the percentage were found.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Experience	Frequency	Percent
Superintendent/Asst.Supt/ Central office	260	25.2
Administration/Management/Leadership	362	35.1
Administration/teaching (5 years or less)	117	11.4
Administration/teaching (6-10 years)	36	3.5
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1514	147.0

n= 1030

[1] Krishan Chand, "Job Satisfaction of Superintendents in the United States" (Ed.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1982),p.34.

[2] Certification requirements vary from state to state but in general these appears to include a master's degree and a number of years of teaching and administrative experience. This reference applies to all the sub-problems 1-3.

About one-fourth (25.2%) of the school boards required a candidate to have an experience as superintendent/assistant superintendent/ and or in the central office; 35.1% required the candidate to have administrative/management/ and or leadership skills and experience; 11.4% required the candidate to have 5 years or lesser administrative and teaching experience; 3.5% required the candidate to have 6-10 years of administrative and teaching experience; 67.2% stated in the job descriptions that the candidate meet the certification requirements; and 4.6% did not mention any requirement in their advertisements.

Sub-problem three

Sub-problem three attempted to determine the tasks requirements for the school superintendents. Frequency distribution and the percentage were found.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF TASK REQUIREMENTS

Task	Frequency	Percent
Curriculum	106	10.3
School finance	106	10.3
Community, staff, board, public relations	89	8.7
Collective bargaining	39	3.8
Bilingual/cross-cultural education	30	2.9
Communication skills	30	2.9
Personnel management	26	2.5
Planning	16	1.6
Ability to delegate	16	1.6
School laws	12	1.1

TABLE 3- continued

Task	Frequency	Percent
Problem solver	5	0.5
Facilities Management	5	0.5
Affirmative action	4	0.4
Deseggragation	2	0.2
Accessing future needs	2	0.2
Political astuteness	2	0.2
Student achievement	2	0.2
Maintain an open climate	2	0.2
Expects excellence	2	0.2
Dedicated to extra-curricular activities	2	0.2
Use of computers	2	0.2
Modern management techniques	2	0.2
Certification	692	67.2
Did not mention any	47	4.6
Total	1243	120.7

n= 1030

About 10% of the school boards required a candidate to have skills/experience in curriculum development and improvement; an equal number required the candidates to have skills/experience in school finance; 8.7% needed candidates with a professional background/experience in the public, community, board, staff, student relations; 3.8% required the candidates to have professional background in collective bargaining; 2.9% school boards required the candidates to have professional background in bilingual/cross-cultural education; an equal number required the candidate to have

good written and oral communication skills; 1.6% needed the candidates to have skills in long and short range planning; an equal number required the candidates to have the ability to delegate; 1.1% school boards required the candidates to have knowledge of the school laws; 3.2% of the school boards required the candidates to have professional capability in problem solving, facilities management, affirmative action, deseggragation, accessing future needs, political astuteness, student achievement, maintaining an open climate; expecting an excellence from self, staff, and students; extra curricular activities, use of computers, and modern management techniques; 67.2% stated that the candidates meet the certification requirements; and 4.6% did not mention any requirement.

Sub-problem four

Sub-problem four attempted to determine the relationship between the demographic variables of the school districts to the educational, work experience, and tasks requirements for the school superintendents.

Coefficient of correlations were determined between the size, type (urban, suburban, rural), location (state), and the various requirements of the school districts. The data analysis reveals that no significant relationships exist between the selected demograpnic variables and the requirements. Whether a school district is small, medium, or large; urban, suburban, or rural; located in any state of the nation their educational, work experience, and tasks requirements are not affected.

Summary Profile

The school boards at the beginning of this decade seeks a superintendency candidate who has a master's degree, meets the state certification requirements, has teaching and administrative experience; has professional skills in curriculum, school finance, human relations, collective bargaining, bilingual/cross-cultural education, communication, personnel, planning, school laws, and other areas of school administration.

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